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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 2 December 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

It is with grave concern that I must draw your attention to the continuation and intensification of Israel's illegal, massive colonial settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In that connection, we wish to place on record our total condemnation of the approval by Israel, the occupying Power, of the construction of 625 new settlement units in the illegal Israeli settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev" in Occupied East Jerusalem as announced on 1 December 2010. The latest unilateral, illegal measure comes on the heels of yet another unlawful announcement by the occupying Power, on 29 November 2010, to build 130 new settlement units in the illegal Israeli settlement of "Gilo", also in occupied East Jerusalem, on land confiscated from the Palestinian villages of Beit Jala, Shu'fat and Beit Safafa. As has been the case over the past years and months, the Government of Israel has continued to choose settlements over peace, and colonization over ending its occupation. These latest plans and announcements further confirm Israel's rejection of its legal obligations under international law, United Nations resolutions and the Quartet road map, as well as its rejection of the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to carry out additional actions that are obviously aimed at changing the status of Occupied East Jerusalem and at entrenching its illegitimate annexation of the city. In that regard, the first phase of the so-called Jerusalem light rail, which was initiated in 2005, is currently under construction. The route of the first instalment of the train line will connect the illegal Israeli settlements of "Neve Ya'aqov" and "Pisgat Ze'ev", via the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shu'fat, to the West Jerusalem city centre and neighbourhoods. The so-called Jerusalem light rail will constitute additional infrastructure serving the illegal settlement network, which is not only in violation of international law but will also present further obstacles to the freedom of

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movement of the Palestinian population and detrimentally impact the fabric and presence of Palestinian life, including residence and livelihoods in the Old City. Moreover, such policies gravely undermine the prospects for the realization of the two-State solution since they deliberately and artificially sever East Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian Territory and destroy its contiguity and viability. We call on the international community to condemn this illegal action and to call on the occupying Power to halt all construction in this regard.

It cannot be disregarded that this latest provocation comes at a critical stage during which all efforts are being exerted internationally and regionally, including by the United States of America, the Quartet and the League of Arab States, to overcome the deadlock and resume serious and credible peace talks between the two sides. In fact, the Palestinian leadership had hoped to hear confirmation during the week that Israel, the occupying Power, would finally comply with its legal obligations and respect the repeated calls and appeals from around the world to cease all such illegal activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. However, the complete opposite has occurred. With these recent declarations along with the ongoing construction throughout all parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem, the international community, including the Palestinian side, has received a clear, blunt answer from Israel in deed rather than word. Its actions reveal its insistence to continue pursuit of this illegitimate campaign at the expense of regional and international peace, with all of the negative ramifications in this regard.

The ongoing threats to the prospects for peace are repeatedly manifested in statements made in that connection by the Government of Israel and its officials. For example, following the most recent approval of illegal settlement expansion in Occupied East Jerusalem, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, himself a settler, repeated his firm opposition to halting illegal settlement construction and stated: "I think, like many others, that there will not be another freeze. We must erase the word 'freeze' from our vocabulary." Such a statement must be firmly confronted and rejected by the international community, in line with the position of principle that has been taken in this regard, as reflected in numerous United Nations resolutions and in line with the Quartet road map call for a freeze of all settlement activities, including natural growth.

We are at an extremely fragile juncture, in which the potential for resuming a credible peace is quickly fleeting. We must not allow the tremendous efforts that have been exerted internationally and regionally, including by the United States, the Quartet, the League of Arab States and all other concerned members of the international community, as well as by the Palestinian side under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, to be in vain and to be arrogantly ignored by the occupying Power.

We therefore reiterate our call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and take a clear and strong position in rejection of Israel's illegal settlement activities as it has done in the past, including via its adoption of numerous resolutions on this issue. There is consensus in the international community, including among the members of the Security Council, on the illegality of Israeli settlement activity, the danger it poses to the maintenance of international peace and security and the urgency of an immediate and full halt. The time has come for serious action to be taken by the Security Council in order to reassert its

rightful role to help salvage any chance that remains to resume peace talks and to bring Israel into compliance with its legal obligations as an occupying Power as well as a Member State of the United Nations.

In addition to the above, we must also draw your attention to the continuing condemnable use of excessive, lethal force by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In that connection, in the early hours of 2 December 2010, Israeli occupying forces killed two Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. This is yet another glaring example that the occupying Power has never, despite any and all peace efforts, ceased its crimes and merciless human rights violations against the Palestinian people. We call on the international community to condemn these latest killings and compel Israel to halt its illegal, violent and provocative actions that threaten to further escalate tensions and destabilize the fragile situation on the ground, and to completely end all efforts to resume peace efforts.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 378 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 November 2010 (A/ES-10/505-S/2010/578) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations